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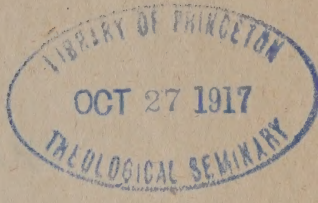
THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS

An Oppressed Nationality



BY

LEWIS B. NAMIER

"The civilised world knows that they (the aims of the Allies) include . . . the liberation of Italians, Slavs, Roumanians, and Czecho-Slovaks from foreign domination. . . ."—[*Extract from the Allies' reply to President Wilson's Note.*]

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO
MCMXVII

PRICE ONE PENNY

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Price 5 *cents.*

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
OCT 27 1917
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS

When as a young man Disraeli first came forward in politics a proud and noble lord inquired, somewhat superciliously: "What is he?" In answer Disraeli wrote a pamphlet in which he sketched the scheme of his life. But then he was a young man. Many people now reading the name of "Czecho-Slovaks" in the Allies' answer to President Wilson ask: "What are they?" They are an old nation which has engraved its history deep in the annals of Europe, and when the question is asked about them, the vision of the future can be substantiated by the facts of the past.

The first question that people ask on seeing that hyphenated name of a nation is whether they are one people or two. By many the question is asked in the best faith; by others with malevolent intent. As a matter of fact, the difference between these two branches of one single nation is mainly a difference in the enemy from whom they have suffered oppression and persecution in the past and are still suffering at the present day. Both speak the same language. The differences between Czech and Slovak are smaller than those existing between the German language as spoken, even by the educated classes, in Vienna, Munich, and Dresden. Slovak is, in fact, merely a more archaic form of Czech. But

whilst the Czechs of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, numbering six and a half millions, at the present day, have fought for the last thousand years against German aggression and suffered from German tyranny, the two and a half million Slovaks who inhabit north-eastern Hungary have had their chief and bitterest enemies in the Magyars. Now when Germans and Magyars are united for life and death in this struggle for dominance over Central Europe, what a joy it must be to them to suggest divisions between their victims! No doubt it would be of advantage to them to weaken that small and isolated Slav nation, which on all its fronts fights against these two dominant races, by dividing it into two separate bodies. Yet at no time was this attempt really likely to succeed. As stated above, the difference between the two branches of the nation is not racial and not even linguistic; it is historic. But then it is an historic difference which points towards union, and after this war will bind the two branches together ever so much more closely. It does not mean any vital division. Historic differences matter where the different traditions imply a difference in the direction of the will, not where they are due to the violence of outside enemies. At all the greatest moments of Czecho-Slovak history the two branches of the nation were one, or at least tried to become one; it was only when crushed by their enemies that they became divided. Even united, they would hardly be a match for the Germans and Magyars, and they are fully conscious of it. They know that liberty is not possible for them or cannot prove durable without the liberty of other sister nations

and, foremost, of the Jugo-Slavs and Poles. But where they themselves hold the line they have decided to hold it strongly and with united forces. Everywhere in the world where the Czechs and Slovaks have created their own organisations the two groups have during this war acted together—in the United States, in South America, in Great Britain, France, and Russia, everywhere where on foreign soil they can work freely for the foundation of their future State. And the eminent Czech statesman who now leads the Czecho-Slovak movement for independence, Professor Masaryk, is himself by birth a Slovak.

In certain ways the Czech nation, as we may call them for short, is unique among the Slavs. It is the only Slav nation that has survived in the very heart of Central Europe, and this is the very reason why it has become the special mark of German hatred and why the Germans have singled it out for the most relentless and untiring attacks. In the early Middle Ages the whole of what we might call the European Middle East was inhabited by Slavs. Their settlements extended from the lower Elbe and the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic and the Ægean. In the ninth century the Magyars, a Mongol tribe closely allied to the Huns and Avars, drove in a wedge between the northern and southern Slav settlements by conquering the wide plains on the middle Danube and the Theiss. Meantime from the west the Germans started to penetrate the Slav territories. (The co-operation of the Teuton Huns and the Magyar Huns is older than is usually thought.) They advanced along the Baltic coast and up the rivers, extending their settlements during

the following centuries to the head waters of the Oder, and along the Danube to the very confines of the Hungarian plain. German settlers and Germanised Slavs in Silesia became in the Middle Ages a barrier between the main bodies of Poland and of Bohemia. Germans and Magyars on the Danube separated the Czecho-Slovaks from the Jugo-Slavs. But in its mountainous quadrilateral the Czech nation has stood out against the German flood, a Slav bastion in the West, taking part and even taking the lead in the intellectual movements of Europe.

In 1349 Prague became the seat of one of the earliest universities of Central Europe, and within less than fifty years the Czechs, centring round the University of Prague, came forward as forerunners and champions of freedom of thought in Europe. Huss and the Hussite movements were the first great contribution of the Czecho-Slovaks to the world's history. The movement, like everything in the Middle Ages, was on its surface predominantly religious, yet religion was deeply tinged by nationality. The growing consciousness of nationalism in religion was one of the mainsprings of the Reformation, the Reformation being among other things the protest of the European nationalities attaining full consciousness of their own individuality, against the inherited universality of Rome. It was therefore by no means an accident that the first protest of national individualism and the first cry for national freedom of action and individual freedom of thought had come from Bohemia. Threatened by the Germans, who had behind them the authority of the Holy Roman Empire of German nationality, the Czechs

arose in a protest against universality, both in Church and State. It is a fact to which sufficient attention has seldom been paid, that among the different articles of accusation raised against John Huss at the Council of Constance was that Huss had instigated among the Czechs national hatred of the Germans. To this accusation Huss answered: "I have affirmed and yet affirm that Bohemians should by right have the chief place in the offices of the Kingdom of Bohemia, even as they that are French-born in the Kingdom of France and the Germans in their own countries, whereby the Bohemian might have the faculty to rule his people, and the Germans bear rule over the Germans." These words, spoken by the martyr on his trial, have remained the programme of the Czecho-Slovak nation.

In their peculiar position they, an isolated Slav body in the midst of their bitter enemies, came to recognise earlier than any other European nation some of the deepest truths of liberty. "*L'homme est un apprenti, la douleur est son maître, et nul ne se connaît tant qu'il n'a pas souffert*," says Alfred de Musset. But then "who increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." The Czechs became the forerunners of Europe and suffered the usual fate of the forerunner. The man who walks through the streets of the city before sunrise is called a thief by the awakened sleepers, and the forerunner is called a heretic, and the heretic must be burned. The Czechs paid to the full the penalty of being forerunners, and, having for many years sustained an unequal struggle against orthodox Europe, they suffered their first terrible defeat. 1526 is the date of the next disaster of Bohemia.

It was a disaster in disguise. For purposes of defence against the growing Turkish menace the Bohemians entered an alliance with Austria and Hungary, reserving, however, for themselves full national rights. In a short time they came to know that the remedy was worse than the disease. The Hapsburgs, as is their habit, soon broke their faith and tried to enforce centralisation in the State and counter-reformation in religion. The Czechs rose up in revolt in 1618 and lit the fire of the Thirty Years' War. The war which ushered in modern Europe seemed to sound the death-knell of the Czech nation, which in 1620 suffered the disastrous defeat on the White Mountain. With the utmost savagery the Austrian-Germans under Hapsburg and Jesuit leadership uprooted the Czech aristocracy and landed gentry, and filled their places with foreign adventurers, who ever since have insulted the country in which they live by considering themselves its peers and owners. The Czech nation lost all its educated classes and practically ceased to exist. There remained nothing except the soil and the peasants, as indestructible as the soil and as passive.

In the eighteenth century almost the memory of the Czech nation had been lost. They were treated as a kind of moribund aborigines. But this was the darkest hour before the dawn. The nation was awakening. At first the rebirth of the Bohemian nation was limited to a narrow circle of philologists and writers. It was treated by the Germans and the Austrian Government with patronising condescension. But soon it began to expand, spreading further and further until millions of men reawakened

to their Slav consciousness. A nation, which towards the end of the eighteenth century had been practically extinct, became a power by the middle of the nineteenth century. With the stubbornness of peasants and the zeal of pioneers the apostles of the Czech nationality worked for the uplifting of their people. The fruit of their labours was a renaissance almost without parallel in the history of the world. Beginning with the midddle of the nineteenth century, they have held, as to wealth and education, the first place among the nationalities of Austria-Hungary.

In 1848 the Czecho-Slovak nation spoke out for the first time since 1618 on matters of international politics. In that fateful year the majority of the Czecho-Slovaks proved by no means hostile to the Hapsburgs. As in every part of Europe, there was, of course, also in Bohemia a revolutionary party. But earlier than anyone else in Europe the Czechs and Jugo-Slavs recognised the double-faced character of German-Magyar "liberalisms"—of liberalisms which claim rights for "master nations" (*Herrenvölker*) and forge chains for weaker nationalities. In opposition to the German and Magyar Imperialisms, the Czecho-Slovaks turned to the Hapsburgs, hoping that, as against the disruptive tendencies of the Pan-Germans and the Magyar separatists, the Hapsburgs would in their own interests rely on the support of the weaker Slav nations, which asked for nothing except justice and the possibility of a peaceful, unhampered national development. The Czechs hoped that the Hapsburgs would make themselves leaders in a rejuvenated Austria. Some writers on international

politics, who now advise the Czechs to seek their happiness in a free and just Hapsburg monarchy, are surely indulging in the pursuit of an ideal for which the lessons of history provide no support. Why, the idea of that happy new Austria had been for generations the dream of the Czech leaders. Palacky proclaimed it in 1848. Dr. Kramarzh, now a martyr for the Czech cause, was still upholding it half a century later. The Czech nation, which was every day gaining in strength and importance, did not aim at the breaking up of the Hapsburg Monarchy. If ever a nation has given a fair chance to a Government, the Czechs have given it to the Government of Vienna. But what were the results? The weaker branch of the Czecho-Slovak nation was in 1867 handed over to the mercies of the Magyars, however much the entire nation protested against it. In Austria itself the predominance of the Germans was established. The promise given by the Emperor Francis Joseph I. to the Czechs in 1870 that he would crown himself King of Bohemia—as he was crowned King of Hungary in 1867—and thereby recognise the historic rights of the Czech nation, was never fulfilled, and the modest rights conceded to the Czechs in a centralised Austria were never safe against new encroachments. It is a fact which no one acquainted with Austrian history would dare to deny, that the Germans in their narrow nationalist interest have wrecked constitutional life in Austria. They have deliberately crippled the Austrian Parliament, because in that Parliament they were in a minority. Without Parliament they can more conveniently control the State through the German clique at the

Viennese Court and the prevalently German bureaucracy. Beginning with 1897, the year when the Germans by their obstruction in Parliament overthrew a Cabinet which enjoyed the full confidence of a vast majority in the House, there was no real safety for the Czechs or Jugo-Slavs in Austria. With every year the chances of a revival of constitutional government were diminishing, and with the recrudescence of bureaucratic and military autocracy German ambitions and German encroachments were growing in strength and weight.

Matters were still worse with regard to international politics. No one ever counted therein but the aristocratic German clique of Vienna and the Magyars. In 1866 Prussia appealed to the Czechs, promising them "independence," but the Czechs knew only too well the nature of Prussia and its Danaan gifts. They did not swallow the bait, and after the defeat of the Hapsburgs they once more declared to the old dynasty that they were prepared to stand by them in the hour of need and fight under their lead against Prussia. With an incomparable blindness the Hapsburgs imagined that they could best strengthen the State for the new struggle by handing over the power in Austria to the Germans and in Hungary to the Magyars. Francis Joseph was soon to learn the consequences of his action. In 1870, when all the Austrian Slavs were eager to take the field on the side of France, the veto of the two dominant races—the Germans and Magyars—prevented intervention. Why should they fight their best friends, the Prussians, the supporters of government based on violence? In 1879 the Dual System of German-Magyar rule over all the other

races of the Monarchy (except the Poles) found its final logical expression in an alliance between Austria-Hungary and the new German Empire. The seeds were sown of the present war. Again and again the Czechs, seeing the spectre of the approaching catastrophe, implored the Hapsburgs not to compromise the future of their Monarchy by aggressive, adventurous plots. To create a counter-balance to Prussian ascendancy the Czechs worked for a *rapprochement* between Austria on the one hand and Russia and France on the other; they were untiring in their endeavours to secure the peace of Europe. They knew what their position was bound to be as citizens of an Austria-Hungary, situated in the very heart of Central Europe, if a war broke out between their German enemies and their Slav and West European friends. It was a thing which no Czech could face without a shudder. When the series of Austro-Magyar intrigues against Serbia had begun, the Czechs tried to save the honour of the Hapsburg Monarchy by revealing the infamy of some of its servants. It was Professor Masaryk, the man now in the forefront of the Czech movement for liberation, who in 1909 took the lead in exposing the notorious Friedjung forgeries—in case of war these forgeries were to have served as Austria's excuse for attacking Serbia. Professor Masaryk showed up and branded their main author, Count Forgach, as a common *agent provocateur*, and Count Forgach never dared to defend himself by bringing an action against his accuser. Yet the same Count Forgach soon afterwards became Under-Secretary of the Austrian Foreign Office, and was one of those mainly responsible for the drafting of the ultimatum

to Serbia in July, 1914! No one responsible for the policy of the Central Powers in that crisis can plead ignorance as to the character and policy of that man.

The Czechs had been prepared to work for a better Austria and to continue in it, even though promises given to them were regularly disregarded. Yet though wishing for the existence of Austria, if Austria was to be a real home for its nationalities, they were always equally determined to destroy it, should it choose to become a jail, with the Germans and Magyars for its jailers. Now Austria has become worse than a jail to the Czechs, worse even than a slave-driver. It has driven them not into slavery, but into fratricide. When Czech regiments were first marched against Russia and Serbia, all past bonds between Austria and the Czech nation were broken for ever. There are words on which one does not go back, and there are facts which can never be undone. Not even centuries can erase the memories of the war into which the Czecho-Slovaks have been driven, contrary to their will, under the command of their bitterest enemies—the Germans and the Magyars. Never again in history are the Czechs to find themselves in the position of mute victims driven into a death dishonourable for men, into a death of slaves fighting for the maintenance of slavery. The Hapsburgs have crossed the Rubicon on their way to Berlin; there can be no comity in the future between the Czechs and the Hapsburgs.

The outbreak of the war placed the Czecho-Slovak nation in a tragic position. They were now to fight for a cause which they knew to be that of their enemies and oppressors, and against those who

upheld the principle of nationality, of the rights of small nations, and of equality between nations, *i.e.*, the only principles by which the Czech nation can attain the position due to it in the world. And in the case of this people, it is more than a vague generalisation to say that the Czechs were conscious of this fact. We are speaking here of a nation which practically has no illiterates amongst its members, and in which the average level of education and well-being is higher than that of Germany, taken as a whole, and equal to those of Holland or the Scandinavian countries. Every Czech is conscious of the interests and ideals of his nationality. No wonder, then, that from the day the war was declared the Czechs were put by the Austrian Government under "special observation" and watched and muzzled as no other nationality in Austria-Hungary has been. "Naturally so," someone might say in defence of the Austrian authorities, "because the Czechs are known to be hostile to the Austrian State." But, then, why do all the Austrian official and semi-official scribblers pour out the never-ending flow of cant about "the glorious unity and cohesion" of which the Hapsburg Monarchy has given proof in the war? How do they dare to maintain that the Czechs "do not want to be liberated"? The war is for the Hapsburg Monarchy not merely external, it is also a war on its submerged nationalities. The Czechs do not complain. War it is between them and the Germans and Magyars. But then the grip of the octopus should not be called an accolade of love.

If attachment to Austria is the dominant feeling among the Czechs, why were not those whom the

Czech nation had chosen for its spokesmen allowed to voice its feelings? Of all the belligerent countries Austria is the only one which has failed to convoke its Parliament, and it was repeatedly admitted that the reason why it was not possible to convoke Parliament was the fear lest the Czechs should speak out. Their true feelings were only too well known to the Austrian Government; one after another the Czech leaders were sent to prison or driven into exile. Dr. Kramarzh, the leader of the Young Czechs—the historic Czech party in the Austrian Parliament—was arrested on a charge of high treason in May, 1915, but the grounds for the accusation were withheld from the public. In June, 1916, Dr. Kramarzh was condemned to death,* and still the Austrian authorities remained silent as to the nature of his guilt. No wonder; when at last, on January 4th, 1917, an explanation was attempted of the verdict, it was found to contain *not a single fact, real or alleged*, which any tribunal outside "Mittel-Europa" would have accepted as sufficient to condemn a man for high treason. He was condemned on general grounds. The blow was struck at him because he is one of the most prominent leaders of the Czech nation. His case was to act as a deterrent for minor men. It was an act of conscious and calculated terrorism, not of justice.

Where a man of the prominence of Dr. Kramarzh —there was a time when he was considered a likely candidate for the post of Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister—where a man of such standing is con-

* The sentence of death was subsequently commuted to fifteen years' imprisonment.

demned to death without a single act of high treason being proved against him, the fate which awaits or befalls other people can easily be imagined. There is not a single prominent Bohemian national leader left free to speak in Austria; they are all either in prison, like Dr. Kramarzh, or in exile, like Professor Masaryk, or have to wear the uniform of the Austrian army and remain under the iron military discipline which leaves no room for any expression of feeling or opinion. Is that because they love Austria too dearly? If Austria has stood so "magnificently" the test of the war, if all her nationalities really feel such love for their rulers, do not the rulers cherish every means by which these sentiments can receive expression, and shower favours and allow all freedom to the Press? How, in particular, has the Czech Press fared during the war? All its main organs have been suppressed, or muzzled to an extent which practically leaves them incapable of voicing in any way the true feelings of the Czech people. One need not go to Czech sources for accounts of these persecutions. It is enough to look through the files of the Viennese papers and see those short notices, each containing only a few lines, and announcing in dry terms that certain papers have ceased to appear or have been forbidden by the police. Here are a few samples:—

Arbeiter-Zeitung, September 24th, 1915: "The political provincial papers, *Straz Venkova*, at Chlumin, near Prague, and the *Ostravsky Dennik*, in Mährisch-Ostrau, have been forbidden publication."

Zeit, September 28th, 1915: "Before the out-

break of the war sixteen Czech political newspapers used to appear in southern Bohemia. Of these up to now eight have voluntarily stopped publication or have been ordered to do so. Of those suppressed by the authorities the *Cesky Jih* appeared at Tabor, *Straz na Sumave* at Strakonitz, and three at Budweiss: *Nashe Slovo*, the Social-Democratic *Jihocesky Delnik*, and the National-Socialist *Straz Lidu*."

Or, again, we may look at the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* of November 26th, 1915, and find the following short and eloquent note, which shows with what edifying impartiality the Austrian police performs its work: "The organ of the Czech Jews, *Rosvoj*, at Prague, and the paper of the Roman Catholic women, *Jitrenka*, at Königgrätz, have been suppressed for the duration of the war." And no one should think that these few notices quoted above are specially picked or chosen. One can come across them any day in Austrian papers, and with them one usually finds short notices of punishments imposed on editors and writers. And yet, in spite of all that oppression, the Czechs speak out again and again. In highly scientific papers, in between dry technical articles over which the Censor must have fallen asleep or which he passed unread, thinking them too tedious to concern anybody, one can find occasionally a short line bearing the appearance of a learned reference or footnote, but saying: "Czechs, remember your fateful hour has come," or containing some similar warning. And one such cry, when it reaches the ears of those to whom it is addressed in the midst of that mournful and yet eloquent silence which now reigns in Bohemia, says more than long and en-

thusiastic articles inspired by official hints and threats.

Before the war the Czechs had a highly-developed system of national friendly societies, of clubs, literary circles, athletic associations, etc. Again, what has Austria done with them in view of that "magnificent zeal" which all her nationalities are alleged to display in the cause of "Mittel-Europa"? Practically all the Czech associations have been suppressed. The first to go were, of course, the *Sokols*, an athletic organisation with Pan-Slav tendencies. Then followed others, till finally not even the most modest professional associations were allowed to survive. Here is one of many examples. The Viennese *Neue Freie Presse* writes, under date of December 22nd, 1916: "As stated in the official paper, the *Wiener Zeitung*, the Minister of the Interior, on the basis of the Law of Associations, has ordered the dissolution of the Union of Bohemian Railway Employees with its seat at Prague."

Special attention was, of course, paid by the Hapsburg Government and the almighty Austrian police to the Czech schools and school libraries. Did they not deserve some praise if they have really produced such enthusiastic "Austrian citizens" to whom nationality was a matter of indifference, and who merely pined to die for the cause of their enemies, the Germans? Amazing to state, no praise was given, and with a curious lack of consistency this time quite a different tale was told. It was stated that the Czech schools had not hitherto fulfilled their purpose in inculcating in Czech children the feeling of absolute loyalty and devotion to their German

masters, and measures were therefore taken to remedy this evil. For some time the teaching in the Czech schools had to be done without text-books, because it was found that all the text-books published before the war in Bohemia, though this had been done under the august auspices of the Austrian Ministry of Education, contained too much about the Czech nation, which to the mind of Austrian-German officials is a mere subdivision of the "Austrian" nationality. At last, in January, 1917, the Austrian authorities produced their new concoction, this time through the intermediary of the *Deutsche Schulbücherverlag* in Vienna. It is interesting to read its description in Czech papers. Of course, not a word could be said of criticism, but its "special features" were emphasised with a clearness which left no room for doubt. The first pages of the book are devoted to the Austrian national hymn and are adorned with the picture of the Imperial Palace at Schönbrunn. Then follow the events of the war, displayed, of course, in a proper light—Austria appears always enthusiastically united in feeling and invariably victorious in battle. The series culminates in an effusion on the duties of a Czech with regard to Austria, the Imperial House, and the other Austrian nationalities. Most interesting is the historical part. Nothing can be found in it about true Bohemian national history. It is not John Huss, or the famous fighter Žižka, not George of Podiebrad, or any other Bohemian leader whose life is told to the Czech children, but stories of Hapsburgs, who were not even rulers of Bohemia, and of Tyrolese fanatics who died faithful like dogs to the Hapsburgs, though betrayed and abandoned by

them; in short, the whole gallery of feeble-minded princes and half-witted peasants who compose Austria's special claim to glory appears in the text-book. Having analysed this book, so full of delightful and instructive reading for children, the Czech papers call special attention to the fact that the name of its editor is withheld from the public. Never had that happened in the past in the case of school books. Is he some German who prefers not to appear in public as the teacher of Czech history, or some Czech renegade who has preserved sufficient shame not to wish to be known as author of that concoction?

The school libraries were most carefully weeded out. The novels of Jirasek were removed, because there is too much in them about the Hussites. Similarly were removed the works of the greatest living Czech poet, Machar (who himself was imprisoned—on account of a poem published ten years ago with the permission of the Austrian Censor, and now republished in the U.S.A. without the knowledge of the author). As the crowning manifestation of the Austrian official spirit the fact may be mentioned that in September, 1916, the historic novels of the Polish writer, Sienkiewicz, and the famous novel, "Cuore," of the Italian writer, De Amicis, were removed from the Czech school libraries in Bohemia. Evidently even the stories of national struggles for liberty fought by other nations are considered dangerous.

It is naturally dangerous to speak of past national struggles for liberty to people who are now engaged in such a struggle. Of course, the women, children, and old men in Bohemia who have

now to suffer from police terrorism, which is as cruel as it is petty and inquisitorial—these cannot conduct the struggle. But on every front to which Czech soldiers are sent the Austrian generals fully understand what it means when a nation desires to break down the walls of its jail. From the very first day of the war it was clear that the Czech soldiers would not fight for the cause of the Germans and the Magyars against their friends—the nations of the Entente. They were therefore put at once under careful "observation" at the front as well as behind the lines. The watch increased in severity with every month of the war. "This is not a war secret," said Prince Ludwig Windischgrätz in the Hungarian Parliament on August 28th, 1916, "and the whole world sees it, how the service battalions are composed—that in every Czech service battalion at least 40 per cent. of Magyar and German troops are included."

Yet all these measures could not prevent the Czech soldiers from carrying out their purpose. Though carefully watched by their German and Magyar hangmen they continued individually and in groups, and even in regiments, to pass over to the side which, in the Austrian terminology, is that of the enemy, but to the Czechs is that of their liberators. In September, 1914, the 8th Regiment of the Czech Landwehr, when ordered to march to the Russian front, refused obedience, and attacked its German officers. Thereupon the 75th German Regiment was sent against it, and the Czechs had to pay the penalty of their revolt. The 36th Regiment, recruited from the district of Mlada Boleslav, also mutinied whilst still in Bohemia, and was deci-

mated by the Germans and Magyars. More effective was, however, the action of the Czechs at the front. The fact that several Czech regiments crossed over to the Serbian side contributed much to the ignominious Austrian defeat in Serbia in the closing months of 1914. Thus, *e.g.*, the 102nd Regiment, recruited from Benešov, crossed over in a body to the Serbians and entered Nish with its band playing the Serbian national hymn. Similar incidents occurred also at the Russian front. Some regiments, as, for instance, the 88th, from Brno, were found out when attempting to surrender to their friends, and were massacred by the German and Magyar troops; others, however, like the 35th Regiment from the town of Pilsen and the 28th Regiment from Prague succeeded in crossing over to the Russian side. Similarly, of the 11th Regiment, from Pisek, all but two companies joined the Russians.

The Czechs who surrendered to the Serbs, Russians, or Italians were soon found fighting again—but this time on the side of their friends. The services rendered by them, especially to Serbia during the two Austrian invasions, and to Russia during the Galician campaign of 1914 and during the summer campaign of 1916, can hardly be exaggerated. With their thorough knowledge of the Austrian army, and in view of the very high level of their education, they form everywhere a most valuable element in the intelligence service. For obvious reasons the full story of their deeds cannot be told as yet, especially no cases of individual bravery or achievements can be mentioned. But the mere fact of men going through all the dangers of desertion at the front and then entering the ranks

of the "enemy" army, with the knowledge that, if taken prisoners, they would be shot out of hand, is a sufficient test of the ardour with which the Czechs desire their liberation and fight for it. It is not the case of *soi-disant* aristocrats knocking about the capitals of Europe and America with big phrases on their lips about the greatness of their nation and the claims which it has on the world. Less has been heard about the Czechs during the war than their cause deserves. For big talking does not suit their nature. It was not by political intrigues or by boundless self-advertising, but by war-work performed in every allied country in which they found themselves, and by true heroism shown on every front to which they were led, that the Czechs have been working for the future of their nation.

Of the Czechs who at the outbreak of the war found themselves on neutral ground or in the States of the Entente, or who were able to escape from Austria afterwards, almost every man of military age is doing his duty. There are Czechs fighting in the French army—they have specially distinguished themselves on the Somme in the Foreign Legion. There are Czechs serving in the British army—some of them have been put into the artillery, which in itself is the greatest sign of confidence that can be shown to men who nominally are "alien enemies." All over the world the Czechs have, by all means at their disposal, fought and counteracted the plots and rancours of their Magyar and German enemies. If at the end of this war the Czecho-Slovak nation attains its liberty and an open road to a new greatness and glory, no one will be able to say that this comes to them as a gift and that they had not done

enough to deserve it. They are working and fighting in the best spirit of a modern democracy, without narrow calculation of sacrifice and immediate reward. This must be said about the Czechs, that they take always and everywhere the widest view of the interests of the Entente, and, living in the very centre of "Mittel-Europa," in the very depths of the German-Magyar jail, they do not mind on which front they fight and in conjunction with which Power. They know that the battle-front is one and that victory and defeat will be common to all. Nor does any other nation bear a more signal testimony to the belief in the power and final victory of the Entente. Of all the nations to be liberated the Czechs are the most distant, the most deeply engulfed in "Mittel-Europa," and yet they do not doubt that for them also the hour of liberation will come in this war. They firmly believe, as the Austrian officials put it in their indictment of Dr. Kramarzh, that theirs will be a glorious lot when the nation "rises out of darkness and humiliation to new life," and that "after the catastrophe to which this war must lead, the Czech nation will be able to develop its strength, unity, and organisation."

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY R. CLAY AND SONS, LTD.,
BRUNSWICK STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E., AND BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

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